

Small Gestures of Kindness and Thoughtfulness

In recent years we have been introduced to the term Random Acts of Kindness, described by author Daphne Rose Kingma as:

“Those kind and compassionate things we do for no reason except that momentarily the best of our humanity has sprung into full bloom. When you perform such an act you are doing not what life requires of you, but what the best of your human soul invites you to do. It is when we step outside the arena of the normal boundaries of our lives that our kindnesses move beyond the routine and enter the realm of the extraordinary and exquisite. Instead of being responsible good deeds, they become embodiments of compassion. To become the perpetrator of Random Acts of Kindness, then, is to become in some sense an angel, for it means you have moved beyond the limits of your daily human condition to touch wings with the divine.”

Which of the following could you do to make a difference in someone else’s life, as well as your own?

1. Be alert to circumstances and people around you and move quickly to assist them by word or deed.
2. Say “good morning” or “hello” to everyone you meet.
3. Say “please” and “thank you” and really mean it.
4. Don’t interrupt someone who is explaining himself/herself.
5. Listen with your full attention when someone is talking to you.
6. Make more eye contact with people to really connect with them.
7. Try to make everyone you meet laugh at least once. Being less serious can improve your interpersonal relationships, even with those people who usually frustrate you.
8. Be especially nice to people who are having a horrible day or a horrible life, even if they are never nice to you in return.
9. Send a handwritten note to people you really care about telling them what they mean to you. The written word is so special because it can be read over and over again.
10. Locate someone from your past who has made an impression on you, and surprise that person with a phone call, e-mail, or note.
11. Smile for no reason to help turn the day around for you and the other person.
12. Start performing a random act of kindness every day and keep up the practice throughout the year.
13. Compliment someone who doesn’t expect it.
14. If you tend to be moody, try to change your attitude. The best part of being nice to people is that you never feel bad about your behavior afterward.
15. When appropriate, end an e-mail with “Enjoy your week” or “Have a great weekend.”
16. Open the door for someone or help someone carry a heavy package.
17. Bring someone a cup of coffee or soft drink.
18. Say “I’m sorry” when you are wrong.
19. Encourage someone who seems despondent.
20. Ask someone, “How are you really doing?” and really listen to the person’s response.

21. Pick up what someone has dropped.
22. Tell people what they mean to you and how they make a difference in your life
23. Help raise someone's self-esteem by making them feel important.
24. Thank everyone in your life who makes your life easier by the things they do for you.
25. Give compliments gracefully and sincerely.
26. Show a genuine interest in others, and make others feel special.
27. Challenge others to be the best they can be.
28. Give priority to close relationships and spend time with people who mean the most to you. Friendships in which you can freely share good and bad news contribute more to happiness than superficial acquaintances.
29. Be alert to the interests of others and send them a card, note, article, book, or small gift that refers to something in their lives or adds to a collection or hobby.
30. Look for opportunities to say:
 - I know you can do it.
 - You are a person of value.
31. Let another driver merge into your lane.
32. Learn the names of people you regularly interact with at the cleaners, restaurant, hair salon, etc., and call them by name.
33. Let someone go ahead of you in line at the grocery store or bank.
34. When you have had good service at a restaurant, hotel, etc., fill out a service card. Most people don't take the time to complete them unless they have something to complain about.
35. Put your shopping cart back in its place instead of leaving it in the middle of the parking lot.
36. Take a minute to direct someone who is lost, even when you are in a rush.
37. Say "I love you" to people you love.
38. Call, e-mail, or write a teacher who changed your life.
39. Write a note to the boss of someone who helps you and explain what a great job that person is doing.
40. Throw away your trash and someone else's after a movie, picnic, visit to a park, etc.
41. Offer to transfer a caller at work who needs help from another department.
42. Pass along a good book you have just finished reading.
43. Make peace with one person.
44. Take someone you don't particularly get along well with out to lunch.
45. Try to see the other person's side of the story.
46. Send a thoughtful handwritten note to someone who doesn't expect it.
47. Instead of giving gifts to each other at work, give each person a box. Have everyone anonymously write down one positive thought about each person and drop it in his/her box.
48. Make a list of all the reasons you are grateful to someone in your life and give that list to him/her.
49. Send a thank you card to someone who would least expect it, like your auto mechanic, attorney, accountant, dental hygienist, doctor, etc.
50. Nurture your relationship with your spouse or partner, don't take him/her for granted, and show that person the kindness you display to others.